

morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then begin a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the following exceptions:

One hour under the control of Senator BOB SMITH; 30 minutes under the control of Senator BROWNBACK; 30 minutes under the control of Senator CRAIG or his designee from 3 to 3:30; and 2 hours under the control of Senator DURBIN or his designee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. I further ask unanimous consent it be in order for the Budget Committee to file the budget resolution between the hours of 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Friday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the budget resolution at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 4, providing the report is available Saturday morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PROGRAM

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. For the information of all Senators, the Senate will be in a period of morning business during the day on Monday. No votes will occur during Monday's session of the Senate. The Senate will begin the budget resolution on Tuesday. Therefore, votes may be expected during the day and into the evening on Tuesday. Members should expect late nights each session next week in an effort to conclude the budget resolution by the end of next week. The leader urges all Members to adjust their schedule accordingly.

#### ELIAN GONZALEZ

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I want to comment for a moment on some of the things that happened today. Yesterday, I introduced legislation to provide permanent residency to Elian Gonzalez because I wanted to try to diffuse what I think is a very volatile situation in south Florida. I believe Elian Gonzalez should be allowed to go to custody court and allow his family—all of his family from Cuba, not just Juan Gonzalez—to come here so they could be free from any encumbrances or any threats or hostility toward them by Fidel Castro. They can sit down as a family, the way a family should, and try to work out the fate of Elian Gonzalez. If that could not be worked out, that it go to custody court.

Regretfully, we couldn't get enough people to support this action. So we have postponed any action. Some have

objected and caused a series of delays which did not provide the opportunity for me to have a vote here today, which I regret. It is my sincere hope that the Attorney General over the next several days will not move to do something that I think would be not only silly but dangerous and not in the best interests of Elian Gonzalez—trying to drag this boy from his home in Miami and send him off to Cuba.

I believe Senators should go on record and say how they feel about this. I have heard some say, I don't want to be involved in a custody battle. I don't either. That is not the job of a Senator. We are asking in this resolution, not to have a Senator interfere with a custody battle, but to allow a custody proceeding to occur.

Right now, this is an immigration situation. Elian Gonzalez didn't come here the way most people immigrate to the United States or immigrate into the United States. He came here floating on a raft, picked up by fishermen after his mother died trying to get him here to freedom.

He deserves his day in court. He deserves to be heard, like any child in America. I want that to happen worse than anything. I want all 100 Senators to speak on this. I hope that happens. I want to let Janet Reno, the Attorney General, know that I urge her to take the time to think this thing through, meet with Elian Gonzalez, talk with the family, and understand that it is in the best interests of this child that his family, all of his family, come here from Cuba—that is what my legislation does—on permanent residency status. They can go back anytime they want to. They are not provided citizenship. They can come here of their own free will without Castro's influence. They can make a decision about this little boy. That is the right thing to do.

I want to acknowledge a statement today made by the Vice President of the United States, Al Gore, regarding Elian Gonzalez. He has today supported this action that I have advocated, along with Senator MACK and Senator GRAHAM of Florida, to have permanent residency status for Elian Gonzalez and his family. I commend the Vice President for what he did. It was a very courageous action. He parted ways with his own administration to say that this is the right thing to do. You have to give credit where credit is due, and he gets all the credit in the world from me for having made that decision. I ask unanimous consent that his statement of March 30, today, regarding Elian Gonzalez, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATEMENT BY AL GORE REGARDING ELIAN GONZALEZ, MARCH 30, 2000

From the very beginning, I have said that Elian Gonzalez's case is at heart a custody matter. It is a matter that should be decided

by courts that have the experience and expertise to resolve custody cases—with due process, and based on Elian's best interests.

It now appears that our immigration laws may not be broad enough to allow for such an approach in Elian's case. That is why I am urging Congress to pass legislation that is being sponsored by Senators BOB GRAHAM and BOB SMITH—which would grant permanent resident status to Elian and his family so that this case can be adjudicated properly. I know that Congressman BOB MENENDEZ has introduced similar legislation in the House as well.

Let us be clear that the real fault in this case lies with the oppressive regime of Fidel Castro. Elian should never have been forced to choose between freedom and his own father. Now we must take action, here on our own shores, to make sure that Elian's best interests are served.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. I will read a couple lines:

From the very beginning, I have said that Elian Gonzalez's case is at heart a custody matter. It is a matter that should be decided by the courts that have the experience and expertise to resolve custody cases—with due process, and based on Elian's best interests.

My sentiments exactly.

Let us be clear, the real fault in the case lies with the regime of Fidel Castro. Elian should never have been forced to choose between freedom and his own father. Now we must take action, here on our own shores, to make sure that Elian's best interests are served.

That is a very powerful statement. I commend the Vice President for making it. I hope the Vice President now can work with some of his colleagues on the other side of the aisle who have been opposing this opportunity to have the permanent residency status on Elian Gonzalez.

This bill is a perfect solution for those who are not prepared to grant full citizenship for this boy. This is a compromise, not full citizenship, and it is not sending him back to Cuba. It is a compromise. It is one on which I have worked for a long time. It is the perfect solution for those who are concerned that the Senate would be stepping into a custody matter. This bill makes this a custody case, as I just said. It removes the issue from the pro-Cuba or anti-Cuba politics. It allows the issue to be settled by a judge who has the expertise in family custody matters to resolve the status of Elian without any intimidation or any threats from Fidel Castro.

As I have stated, this is a decision the Attorney General has made. I applaud the Vice President's endorsement, and I hope and plead with him to pick up the telephone, call some of his former colleagues, and urge them to support this legislation or urge Janet Reno to pull back from this insistence that Elian Gonzalez not have permanent residency status.

I will have more to say on this when we return on Monday.